

Normal Heights



Neighborhood Centers

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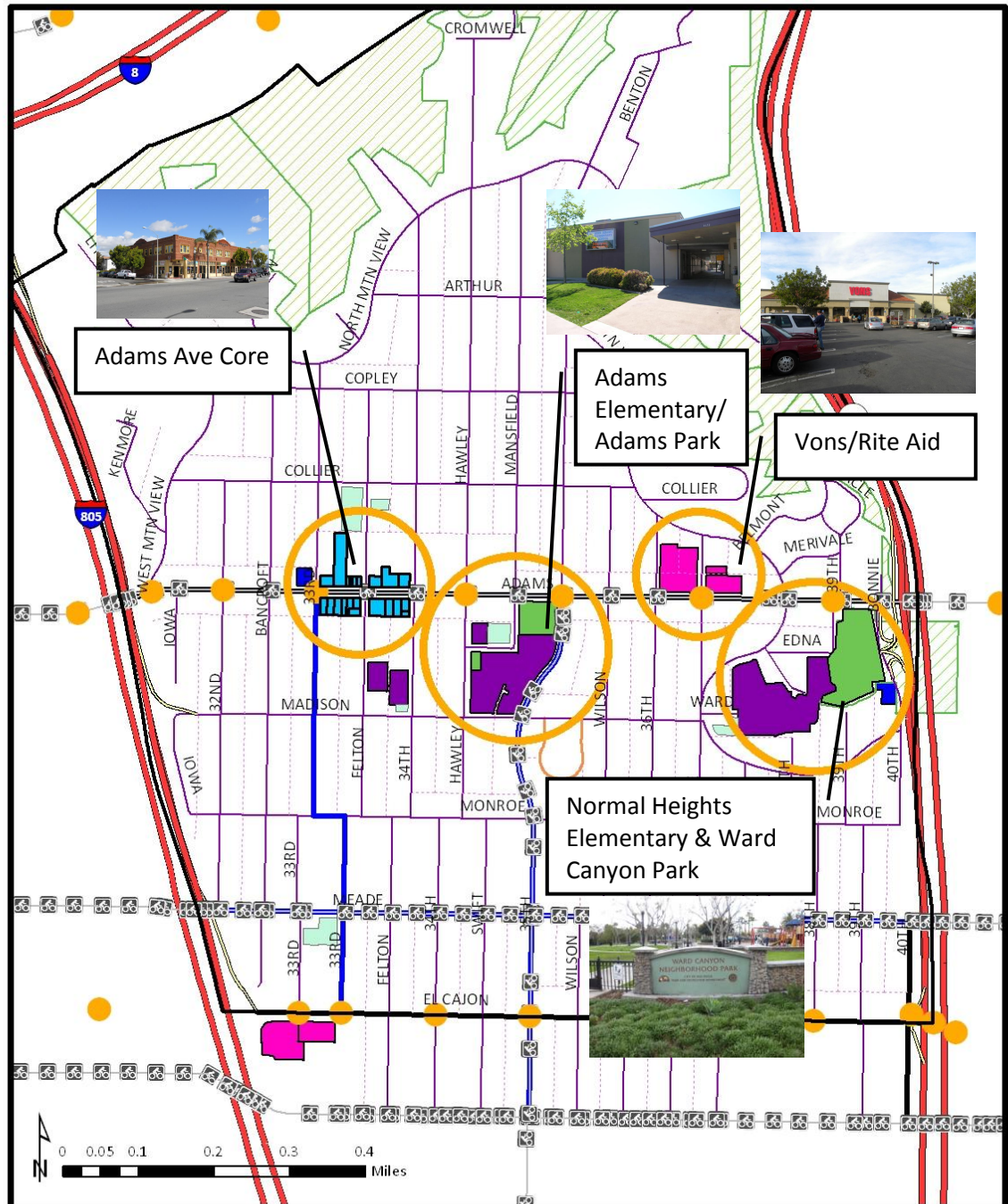
City Planning 700

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Normal Heights Neighborhood Centers

Four existing neighborhood centers were previously identified that serve the community as civic, recreational and commercial gathering places. The existing neighborhood centers are identified on the map below

Neighborhood Centers Map



Adams Avenue Core

Location of Center

Within the Adams Avenue corridor spans a two-block section of Adams Avenue from the 33rd to 34th cross streets. This section provides a diversity of businesses and services, unique cultural elements, and opportunities for entertainment and leisure. The map below shows an aerial image of this vibrant center of place.

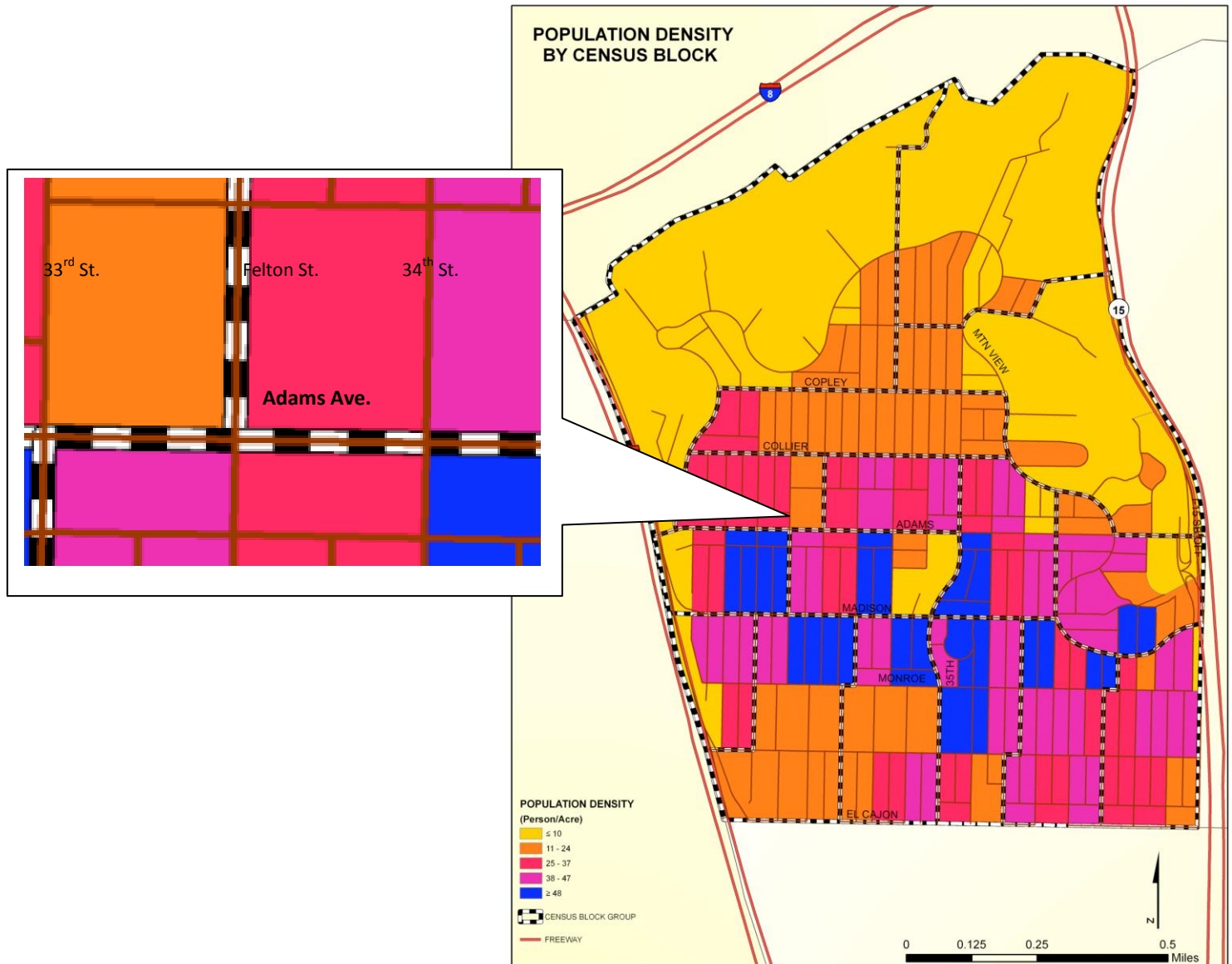


Historical Fact

In 1916 Bertam J. Carteri, a carpenter, moved to Normal Heights and was responsible for the main business development along Adams Avenue. He purchased his first commercial lot on Adams Avenue between Felton and 33rd Street around 1922, which is now referred to as the Carteri Center. In partnership with local architect Louis J. Gill, Carteri began buying, renovating, and selling the first single-family bungalows in the community. His architectural style and signature is very apparent in the single-family homes within the Carteri Center.

Population Density

The Adams Avenue core serves a diversity of residents and visitors from the greater San Diego area on a daily basis and is densely populated according to census block group data. The dominant housing typology North of Adams Avenue is single-family, while a mixture of multi and single-family housing is prevalent south of Adams Avenue. Due to its dense nature, this area is conducive to a range of uses to accommodate varying needs.



Uses

The Adams Avenue core has all the uses necessary for a vibrant center of community. The uses vary, ranging from utilitarian to entertainment in nature. Residents and visitors can attend yoga classes, grab lunch or a cup of coffee, go to the self-service car wash, and drop off their mail at post office, all within the walking distance of two urban blocks.



Record Store.



Car Wash.



Dog groomer.

In addition to local businesses, several commercial buildings accommodate living spaces on the second floor. Also, a small gated apartment complex, with an open plaza is nestled between two local businesses.



Apartment Complex between Felton & 33rd

The presence of residential units within the commercial area provides a sense of safety and added security on this busy corridor. More “eyes on the street” helps foster an environment that is appealing, inviting, and unfettered from a sense of uncertainty or inherent danger.

Characteristics

Normal Heights is never void of anything to do or see, either day or night. There is always a mix of people doing a variety of things. On a typical Sunday afternoon one might see an elderly couple walking their dog, a young couple going out to lunch, or a little girl and her dad taking a walk to the Ward Canyon Park.

It is the mix of uses, diversity of individuals, human-scale design, and wide sidewalks that generate a charming synergy that is characteristic of Normal Heights.

Buildings

The Adams Avenue core is a strong commercial center consisting of locally owned businesses and services. Many of the buildings in Normal Heights have zero yard setbacks; however, many restaurants and cafes have recognized the need to provide outdoor seating to their customers. Store fronts have wide and transparent windows and doors allowing pedestrians accessibility and visibility from various points along the street.



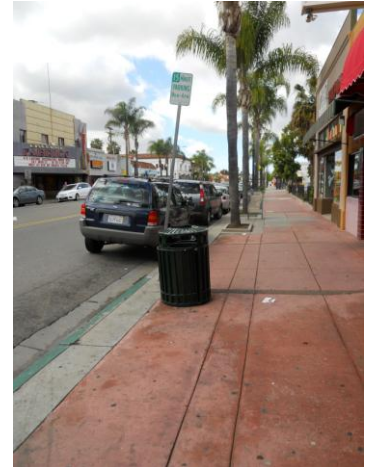
Many of the buildings have their own unique styling and characteristics. The core area is mostly a horizontal type of mixed-use. However, there are a few key buildings such as the Wilkinson Block at the corner of 34th and Adams that are vertical in orientation and are able to provide more types of services through the use of a second story.

Normal Heights has a variety of infill developments along the corridor. One of the most noticeable and unique reused building is the Discount Fabric Store which is located in an old movie theater house. The marquee is used as a message board to publicize important community events and reminders.



Street Amenities

The streetscape of the core area is lined with trees, providing a natural canopy from the sun and to also create a divide between cars and pedestrians. Decorative street lighting lines the street to create a sense of uniformity and consistency. In addition, trash cans are found on every block in order to discourage littering and promote civic pride within the community. On most blocks benches are provided to pedestrians as a refuge and gathering place



Transportation

Sidewalks are wide and can accommodate a number of pedestrians travelling in both directions. The sidewalks appear to be even surfaced and accommodating to all types of users.

An MTS transit stop, located at the corner of 33rd and Adams Avenue, provides basic transit amenities including a small bench and pedestrian overhang, with route times and destinations posted on the bulletin behind the bench. The route travels to key destinations in San Diego such as San Diego State University and downtown San Diego.

Opportunities for Enhancements

Adams Avenue core functions efficiently as a center for commerce and entertainment. However, small design enhancements will help advance the look and functionality of this already bustling center.

- **Find ways to reuse space such as parking lots.**
 - Corner of 33rd and Adams
 - Work with owner to see how this sparsely used parking lot can be used and open to the public. Perhaps a small market or square could be beneficial.
- **Enhance store frontages that are vague or aging.**
 - Example: Bookstore on corner of 33rd and Adams.
- **Intensify Uses wherever possible.**
 - Example: West of 33rd Street
- **Provide recycling bins on every block.**
 - This can enhance sustainability and promote “greener” choices.
- **Add striped pedestrian crossing to enhance quality of walkability for all users.**
 - Example: 33rd, Felton, and 34th
- **Additional streetscaping in areas that appear barren and non-discreet.**
 - Example: West of 33rd Street



Adams Avenue Core Potential Areas for Design Enhancements



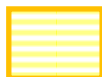
Potential Site for
Secondary Use



Enhance/Renovate Store
Frontages



Intensify Uses and



Pedestrian Crossing
Striping



Bike Lane



Additional
Streetscaping



Recycle Bin



Wayfinding
System/Signage

Adams Elementary/Adams Park

Overview

John Adams Elementary and Adams Park is a natural neighborhood center for residents to come together and interact. Adams Elementary/Adams Park is a multi-functioning space that serves both an educational and recreational purpose. As a contiguous complex located at the geographic center of Normal Heights, the Adams Elementary/Adams Park site is enclosed by Adams Avenue; Hawley Boulevard; Mansfield, School, and Thirty-fifth Streets (Map 1).

Adams Elementary is located on a 4.6-acre parcel on Thirty-fifth Street, between Adams and Madison Avenues. The elementary school was built in 1961 and can accommodate approximately 375 students from Kindergarten to the fifth grade. Directly adjacent to the elementary school is Adams Park. Adams Park functions as a joint-use facility. Use of the park is shared between the City of San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District to help meet the community's recreational needs. Adams Park consists of a multi-sport field, two outdoor basketball courts, children play area, an outdoor stage, and Adams Recreation Center.

Adams Recreation Center is located on the corner of Thirty-fifth Street and Adams Avenue. The facility was built in 1987 and is operated by the City of San Diego Park and Recreation Department. The recreation center provides free and fee-based community programs and daily activities for youth, adults, and seniors. To help support the youth programs at the recreation center, the community is encouraged to recycle at the center's recycling area located on Mansfield Street. In addition, the recreation center has a free lunch program in the summer that provides children, ages 1 to 18, free noontime lunch and late afternoon snacks.



Site Analysis

Adams Elementary and Adams Park is a continuous space with three distinctive areas or “places.” Chain link fencing delineates the Recreation Center and picnic area, multi-sport field, and Adams Elementary. The chain link fencing acts as a permeable boundary, which gives the space a sense of openness and cohesion between the separate areas.

Adams Park and Recreation Center

Adams Park is situated on the Adams thoroughfare and is seamlessly embedded within the commercial corridor. The small Recreation Center acts as the park's anchor along this busy commercial stretch. Off the sidewalk, there is a picnic area that consists of a small children play set, four picnic tables, benches, and a pedestrian pathway. Although the picnic is well landscaped with ample seating, it was observed to be underutilized amid

the activities of the surrounding businesses. In addition, the park space lacks a well-defined entrance from Adams Avenue. The entrance marking is easily overlooked and could be more prominent from the street.

Beyond the picnic area is an open space area it is enclosed by fencing. Within this space is a softball field with bleachers; a blacktop playground with basketball courts and children play equipments; and a grassy area with an open stage. The open field is well utilized for both adult and youth sporting activities, such as softball and flag football.

Adams Elementary School

Directly south of the park is Adams Elementary School. The fencing delineates the park space from Adams Elementary School. The buildings are painted in neutral pastel colors and the main office is constructed in the 1960s modern style. Adjacent to the main office building is a two-story building that is visible from the park. The school grounds also contain classroom bungalows and a parking lot.



Adjacent Uses

The immediate area encircling Adams Elementary and Adams Park is a dynamic mixture of uses and services. As shown in Map 1, the area is well populated by both businesses and residential housing which maximize the utility of the space as a neighborhood center. The agglomeration of the Normal Heights Community Center and Normal Heights Methodist Church, which are adjacent to the park, add to the civic and public uses of the space. This area is inviting and nicely landscaped. Furthermore, the space is located near areas of high population density and flanked by multifamily housing (Map 2).

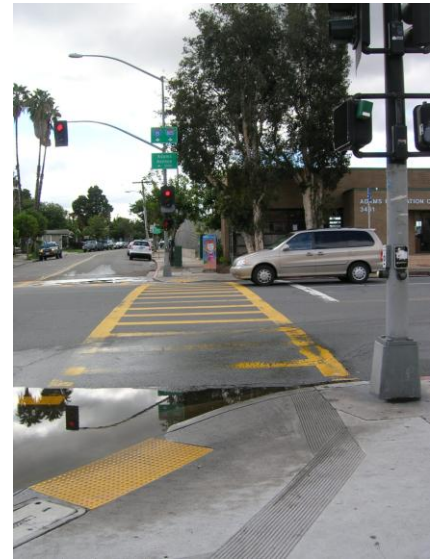


To add to the ambiance and use of the park, the area directly across the street (north) from the park can be improved by an intensification of commercial use. Currently, there are two unmarked buildings,

whose function is unknown and the Dimille's Restaurant parking lot. This area lacks diversified functions that would engage and draw people to use the adjacent park.

Connectivity

Adam Elementary and Adams Park is easily accessible by public transit, automobile, bicycle, or on foot. Its central location within the community provides maximum access for residents to utilize these facilities. Clearly marked yellow crosswalks at the surround streets as well as traffic and pedestrian signals on Adams Avenue and Thirty-fifth Street helps direct traffic at this busy intersection. With the exception of Adams Avenue, narrow streets with clearly posted speed limits surround the space.



Design Recommendations

Image and Identity

Improve the visual quality of Adams Park from Adams Avenue to define the character, increase the vitality of the center, and promote social interaction.

- Enhance park signage and entrance from Adams Avenue to frame the park as a recreation area and attract users.
- Add a water feature to create a visually interesting, inviting, and enjoyable space for social gathering.
- Add a community bulletin board to facilitate the exchange of information, foster opportunities for community participation, and enhance the sense of community.
- Provide additional outdoor lighting facilities to improve safety and deter illicit activities.



Amenities

Offer features that make the center comfortable for people to use the space year-round.

- Provide a cover picnic area for comfortable seating that is protected against the elements.
- Make available clean and safe public restrooms.

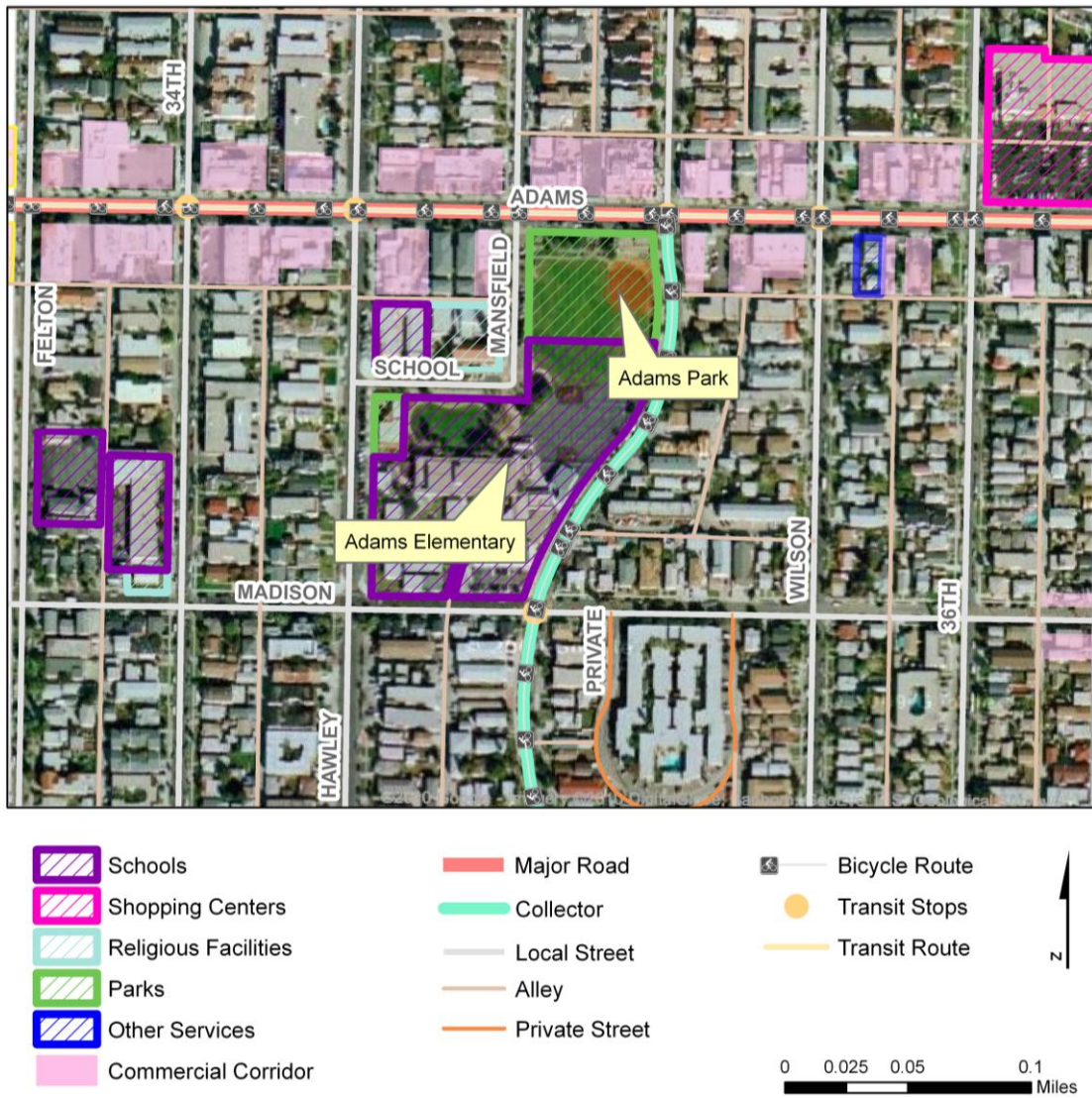
Attractions and Destinations

Create multi-purpose spaces that draw people to the center throughout the day.

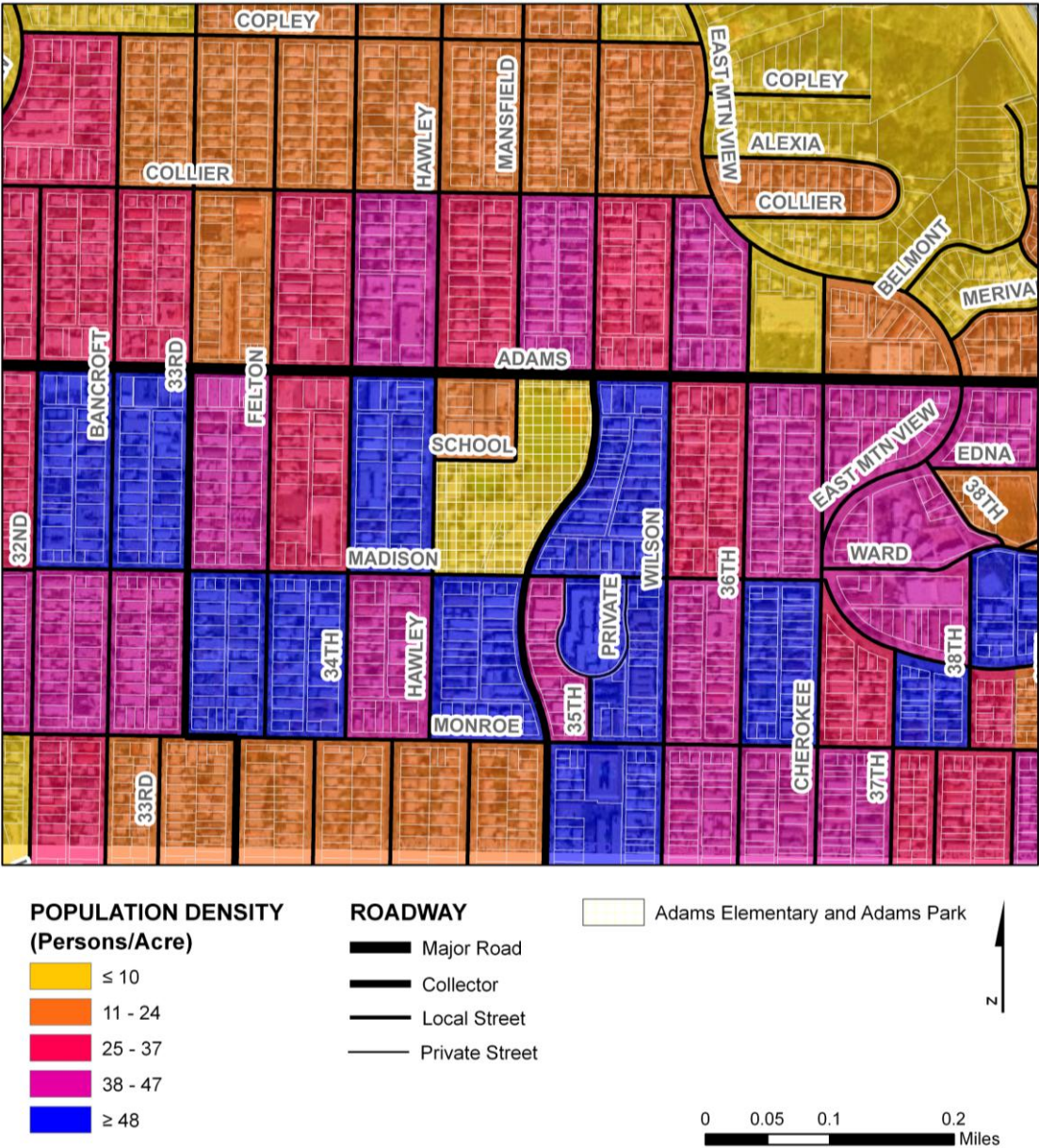
- Infill development on the lots across the street. Add resilient uses and/or enliven the development of the surrounding business to draw residents “in” to the center.
- Provide for flexibility in the use of space.
- Mansfield and School Streets (one-way streets) could be used as sites for a weekly farmer’s market.
- After the rain, the children play set in the picnic area is filled with water. Improve water drainage from the play area.
- Provide attractive landscaping by vegetating the corridor on along Thirty-fifth Street to promote pedestrian activity.



Adams Elementary and Adams Park Neighborhood Center



Population Density Surrounding Adams Elementary and Adams Park

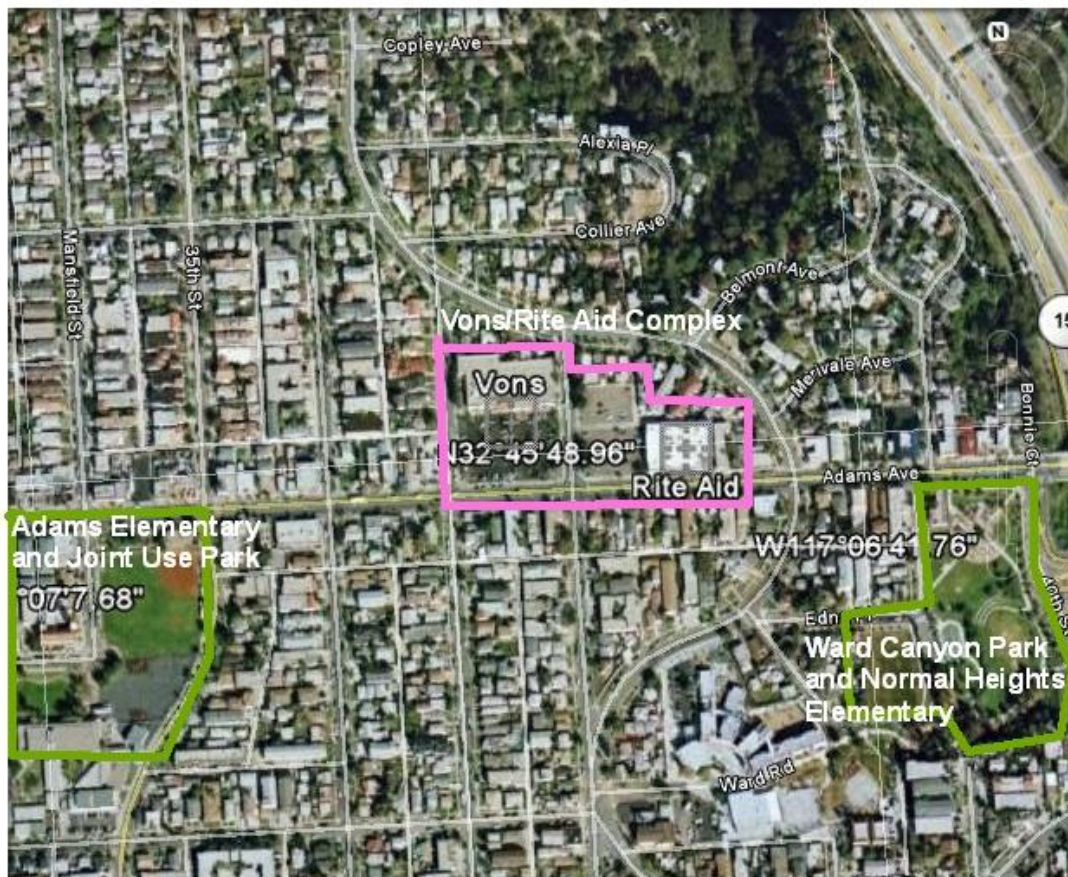


Vons/Rite Aid Complex

Overview

The Vons supermarket and the Rite Aid drug store are located on Adams Avenue. Although they are not directly adjacent to each other, these buildings are close enough in distance to be considered one complex (and one center) in the community. These buildings are well within walking distance of each other. Each lot is characterized by a large parking lot in front of the building. The Vons parking lot is markedly busier, and is full or nearly full in the evening and on weekends. The Rite Aid parking lot is almost never full and usually half full at most. In reality, it is two parking lots – a north and south lot divided by an alley that runs through the parking lots and the residential units behind Rite Aid. This north lot seems to provide parking for Rite Aid and for the surrounding residential units, but on a land use map this lot is zoned for retail, and it appears Rite Aid owns all of the parking area in that space. One narrow residential street (Cherokee Avenue) bisects the Vons and Rite Aid lots. The Vons parking lot has a large recycling center on the side that is adjacent to Adams Avenue. Both buildings are in decent physical condition, and are basic in structure (no aesthetic excitement).

Location of the Vons/Rite Aid Complex

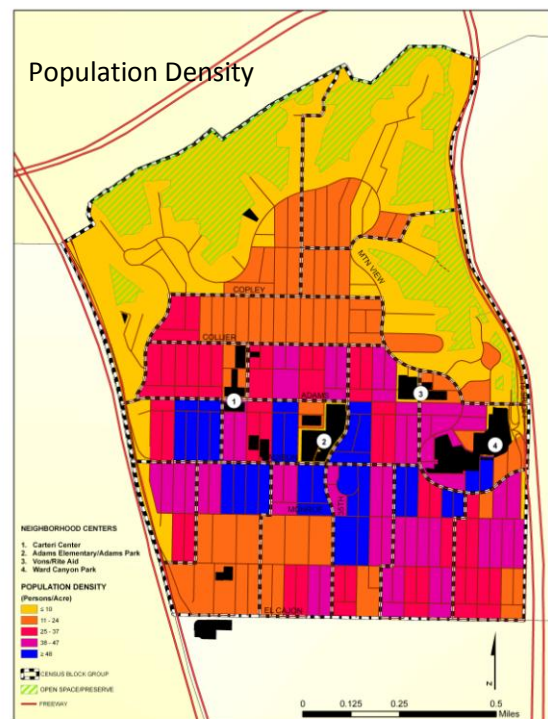




Land Uses Surrounding the Site

The land uses surrounding the Vons/Rite Aid Complex are primarily single-family residential to the north, commercial and multi-family to South, West and East. Adams Avenue, the main corridor through Normal Heights contains one and two-story commercial, residential, and office buildings on either side of the

Vons/Rite Aid Complex. Single and multi-family residential housing units encircle both lots on the northern sides, and some of the units are situated very close to the Rite Aid parking lot. A few even have entrances facing the Rite Aid parking lot. The census block groups which contain and surround the complex have high population densities. The majority of the eastern side of the neighborhood is able to walk to the complex. Few walk barriers have been observed. The community's two main parks, Adams Elementary School Joint Use Park and Ward Canyon Park, are within a few blocks of the complex. A sidewalk on Adams Avenue and Cherokee Avenue is in good condition and wide enough for disabled people and strollers. Landscaping is well-maintained, with a mix of new and mature trees and bushes.



Uses and Accessibility

The Vons/Rite Aid Complex is used solely for commercial use. All land is assumed to be privately owned by the businesses. Each lot is publicly accessible; however, these lots were built with private motor vehicle accessibility in mind, especially in the case of Vons where pedestrians must transverse a parking lot and several vehicle



routes to get to the entrance. Pedestrians can access Rite Aid more easily coming from the sidewalk along Adams Avenue. However, those coming from the residential area to the north of the lot would take a diagonal route across the parking lot. The complex currently serves as a commercial center in the community, where local residents of Normal Heights and Kensington purchase groceries and household goods. The sidewalk along Adams Avenue is large and in decent condition. There is a sizeable bicycle rack in front of Vons, but Rite Aid has only one rusted bicycle rack where one has to search to find it. Both lots are accessible by bicycle, although Adams Avenue does not have a bicycle lane. A bus stop in front of and across the street from Vons makes this complex accessible by bus (via Route 11).

Observations at the Center



Within the Space

The character and ambiance of the complex is one of friendly but disassociated connections. Shoppers on occasion run into neighbors and say hello, or are friendly with the staff at Vons or Rite Aid, but are essentially there to make a purchase and leave. There are a few tables outside of Vons, but they are not inviting as people are coming and going around them, and the parking lot is not conducive to people watching. There are no tables or places to sit outside Rite Aid. There

is no bench on the sidewalk on Adams Avenue except for the bus stop. The trees, although they provide some greenery around the complex, are young and small and do not provide a lot of shade. The Vons lot is always more populated than those at Rite Aid. People of all ages utilize both stores. People are seen both in groups (usually families and couples) or alone. This space appears to function as a neighborhood center with a singular purpose to purchase goods.

The Approach

Streets around the complex affect it generally positively – Adams Avenue has some pedestrian activity and a mix of uses located nearby and attracts people in vehicles, and the other surrounding streets are narrow and pedestrian-oriented. However, the entrances to each lot are too



car-dominated. The diagonal sidewalk pattern in the landscape encourages pedestrians in both the east and west corners of the bloc to walk right into vehicle-dominated parking territory to go to entrance, instead of going north along the sidewalks and into the store more safely. From both the east and west, the main entrances are the driveways for vehicles. Rite Aid fairs somewhat better with pedestrians since the building is located right off Adams Avenue, and pedestrians can walk to the entrance without crossing the parking lot. However, those coming from the northern side must cross the two lots with cars coming in and out. The main entrance on the west side is also dominated by vehicles – pedestrians must be careful to watch for cars going into the driveway.

The Enclosure

The complex feels enclosed at the pedestrian level, isolated from the street by the expansive parking lots and the curbed edges that define them. However, from the vehicle level, the complex feels generally open, inviting parking in front of the stores. The space does not “hang together” so much as a center – it feels more like two large, separate lots close together where people do business and leave. The space can be clearly seen across the street. The openness issue should be addressed to make the space more inviting to pedestrians and feel more “open” on Adams Avenue. The complex is also not aesthetically pleasing – while not an eyesore, it does not have any “unique” characteristics other than size of the lots and the large and not so aesthetically-pleasing recycling center. The large parking lot is a pedestrian barrier on both lots, and the tremendous amount of space devoted to parking (especially in the Rite Aid lot) makes the space feel empty. The Rite Aid building also appears alienated from Adams Avenue, even though it is adjacent to it, because the entrance faces the lot instead of the sidewalk. The Rite Aid lot would benefit from infill development or some public-serving use of the parking lot.

Design

Frontage

As described in earlier sections of this analysis, there are weaknesses in the space that should be mitigated or fixed with design enhancements. There are barriers to building frontage from parking lots (Vons) and building orientation (Rite Aid). Rite Aid in particular could use pedestrian-oriented frontage on the side of its building that faces Adams Avenue, such as a window, instead of a blank wall. Other improvements, such as a wrap-around awning, would provide shade for pedestrians. Vons is clearly visible from the street, but could benefit from including a pedestrian-priority walkway through the parking lot (ideally it would be good to move the building face down to Adams Avenue and have the parking lot in back, but a pedestrian walkway would be a relatively simple retrofit measure).



Uses

The complex could benefit from added public uses (i.e. more spaces for tables) but it does not need to add a lot of public uses as there are public spaces located close by, such as Ward Canyon Park and Adams Elementary Park. However, there are changes that could make the complex a more inviting space, such as infill development on the Rite Aid parking lot (in particular the north lot) to provide uses other than a grocery and drug store, and make the space appear less vacant. The

parking lot could also be given a dual purpose – perhaps on the weekends this lot is converted into a locally-organized bicycle repair station. Maybe the recycling center at the Vons location could have more public involvement with environmental education. Additional and upgraded benches and umbrellas in front of Vons could add a public realm to the area and could become a more inviting place for people to stop for a while and drink their coffee (there is a Starbucks inside Vons), chat with neighbors, and so on.

Entrances

As previously discussed, entrances to each store could be redesigned to be more pedestrian-oriented. There needs to be a pedestrian connection from Adams Avenue bus stop location and block corners into Vons – whether it takes form via an at-grade or curbed “green” pedestrian-priority path (i.e. permeable material that absorbs groundwater runoff) or simply paint striping. This path would serve not only the pedestrians coming from the sidewalk, but from people getting out of their vehicles and heading into the store. Rite Aid pedestrian orientation could be improved with a “green” pedestrian-priority path from the residential section to the north into the store that would connect. Vehicles would still be able to access the parking lot via the driveway from Cherokee Avenue. Even if vehicles were able to drive over the pedestrian path, it would make a visible and psychological barrier between people and vehicles. Closing the driveway into the Rite Aid lot from Adams Avenue would improve pedestrian safety on the sidewalk.

Connections

There is a stoplight and pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Adams Avenue and Cherokee Avenue, but there is no pedestrian crossing at the



intersection of 36th Street and Adams Avenue. The nearest crosswalk to the west is at 35th Street and Adams Avenue, which is two long blocks away. Many people cross the street at 35th Street and Adams Avenue despite a lack of a crosswalk. Adding a crosswalk to the intersection of 36th Street and Adams Avenue would decrease the risks of an accident between pedestrians and vehicles. The crosswalk at the intersection of Adams Avenue and Cherokee Avenue has a stoplight and pedestrian signal, but could be enhanced by adding paint striping. A pedestrian path that bridges the Vons and Rite Aid stores (and any additional infill development) would enhance the connectivity between the commercial buildings. A new crosswalk on Cherokee Avenue connecting the pedestrian path and Vons would further enhance this connectivity.

Elements

Design elements such as more benches, awnings and umbrellas, pathways, and façade improvements could improve the function of the Vons/Rite Aid Complex to become an improved civic space as well as a commercial center. These features would help attract pedestrians from Adams Avenue and the northern residential area as well as create a space where people would want to stay an extra few minutes before or after they shop. Additional uses and infill, such as a dual-use of the Rite Aid north lot and an additional store, could attract more people to the space in general and also improve its quality as a civic space. Improved and visible bicycle racks would make the complex more bicycle-friendly. The bus stop in front of Vons has covering and information, and the stop across the street from Vons would benefit from the same treatment as it is currently with those amenities.

In summary, the center could be enhanced with the following amenities/actions:*

*Many of the design improvements suggested in this section are visible in the moleskin drawing and the Google Maps photo. Moleskin drawing is not drawn to scale.

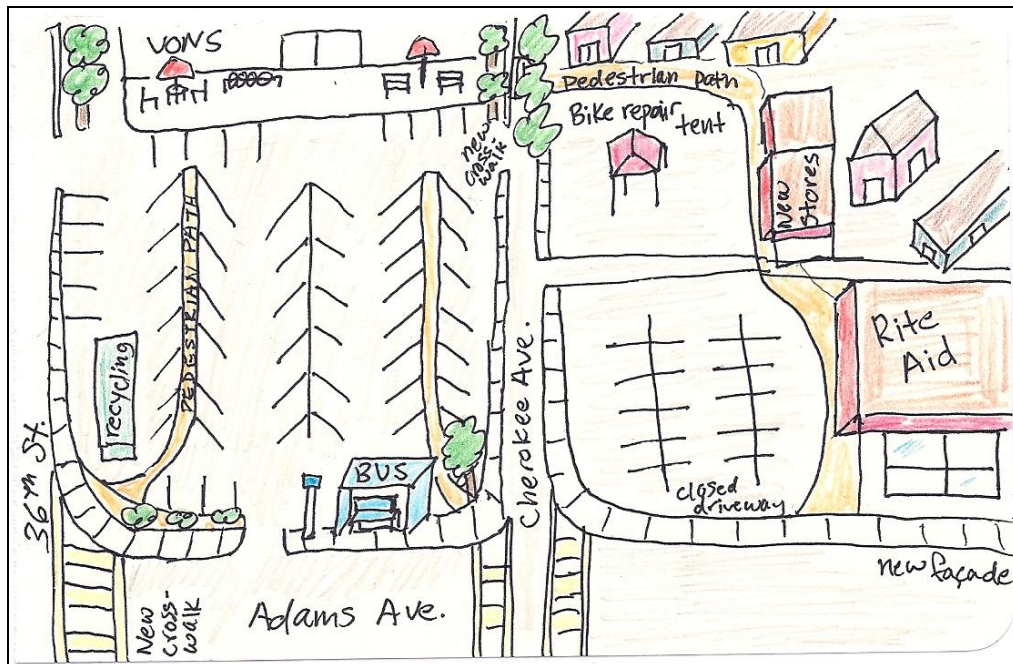
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- Pedestrian paths through Vons and Rite Aid parking lots
- Crosswalk located at 36th Street and Adams Avenue
- Crosswalk located at Cherokee Avenue between Vons and Rite Aid
- Paint striping on crosswalks at Cherokee Avenue and Adams Avenue
- Improved and visible bicycle racks at Vons and Rite Aid
- Infill development and/or dual-use at the north Rite Aid lot
- Close the Rite Aid driveway on Adams Avenue for sidewalk connectivity
- Improve the façade of Rite Aid on Adams Avenue
- Add benches and umbrellas in front of Vons and Rite Aid and street furniture on Adams Avenue
- More extensively, relocate Vons to have its entrance directly off Adams Avenue and place parking in the back.

Potential Improvements to the Vons/Rite Aid Complex



Moleskin Drawing of Potential Improvements



Normal Heights Elementary & Ward Canyon Park

Overview:

The Normal Heights Elementary school and Ward Canyon Park are located along the eastern boundary of Normal Heights. Ward Canyon Park is bounded by 40th street to the East, 39th street to the West, Adams Avenue to the North, and Ward Canyon and Residential uses to the South. Ward Canyon Park was recently built in 2003 as part of an agreement between Caltrans and the City of San Diego for the construction of Interstate 15¹. It consists of two playgrounds, a picnic area, green space, a basketball court, an amphitheatre, and a comfort station. Normal Heights Elementary is a recent addition to the community. It officially opened in 2006 and was built with Proposition MM funds². Normal Heights Elementary sits on 5.9 acres. It is bounded by Edna Place and East Mountain View Drive on the North, Ward Canyon Park on the East, and residential alleys to the West and South.



Entrances:

Ward Canyon Park has an easily identifiable entryway at the corner of Adams and 40th Street. The corner is anchored by a large hardscape area, a monument sign and two wrought iron gates. The gates were closed during the site visit. No pedestrians were observed entering or leaving the park through this main entryway. Additional gates are located on Adams Avenue and 40th street. The Park is fenced along most of the perimeter with the exception of the frontage on 39th Street. The low wrought iron fences serve as a barrier between children using the playground and the high speed and high volume traffic on Adams Avenue, 39th and 40th Streets.



¹ Adams Avenue Business Association Website: Normalheights.org

²Source: San Diego Unified School District Website: <http://old.sandi.net/propmm/normalheightselem.htm>

Normal Heights Elementary School is tucked away within the residential neighborhood. Although it does have an identified entrance at the terminus of Ward Road, it does not have an established presence on any of the main thoroughfares of the community.

Connections:

Ward Canyon Park and Normal Heights Elementary function separately instead of as an interconnected center. They are connected by a concrete path and green space that runs parallel to Ward Canyon. At the time of observation on a weekend afternoon, the twelve foot high chain link gates were locked. No direct access was possible from the Ward Canyon Park and Normal Heights Elementary School. Opportunities need to be explored to link these two highly compatible uses into one functioning center. Despite the lack of connectivity between the two uses, Ward Canyon has good pedestrian accessibility and bicycle facilities. The wide non-contiguous sidewalk on the north side of the Park fronting Adams provides comfort and security to the pedestrian despite the high speeds of traffic on Adams Avenue near the freeway ramps. Non-contiguous sidewalks frame the park



on 40th and 39th streets. Concrete paths circle the park and provide opportunities for young children to ride bicycles and for people to stroll or use to cross the park to access the neighborhood to the south.

Surrounding Uses:

The Normal Heights Elementary and Ward Canyon Park are framed by a variety of uses. A mixture of higher density multi-family and single-family residential uses frame the park and school. Limited commercial uses are located on Adams Avenue.

Observations

Community Relations Office

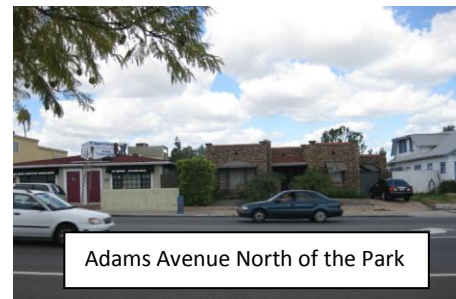
A Community Relations Office is located at the southeast corner of Adams and 39th Street on the corner of the park site. It is an old block building with little transparency. A pedestrian walking to the park on Adams Avenue would view this poorly maintained building instead of an inviting entrance to the community park. It serves as a view barrier into the park site. Redevelopment of the corner has the potential to tie the park into Adams Avenue and the rest of the community.



Community Relations Office

Active Uses & Surveillance

There is a lack of active uses surrounding the park. Across from Adams to the North, there are residential, computer repair, and a gift shop. Single- and multi-family residential border the Park across 39th street. There is no active use on 40th Street due to the proximity of the I-15 freeway. Ward Canyon forms the southern perimeter of the park. There are only two opportunities to locate active uses near the park: the North side of Adams and the West side of 39th Street. The current uses do not provide an adequate mix of uses to keep the park under natural surveillance. In addition, the park slopes down from Adams Avenue to Ward Canyon. This elevation difference leaves the green space portion of the park without any real natural surveillance.



Adams Avenue North of the Park



Multi-Family West of the Park

Park Programming

The playground and other programmed spaces such as the basketball courts appear to be well used. Many families with children were observed visiting the park to play on the playground, have parties, or use the green space to run or play catch. However, there were some spaces in the park that did not appear to function as well as they could. Although beautiful and well-maintained, the picnic tables and benches were rarely used. The orientation of the benches did not appear to be conducive to gathering and have a discussion. They were placed back to back with approximately twenty or more feet between them. The amphitheater has great potential but the placement of picnic benches randomly detracts from it. There is not natural stage for children and adults to perform.



I-15 Proximity & High Speed Traffic

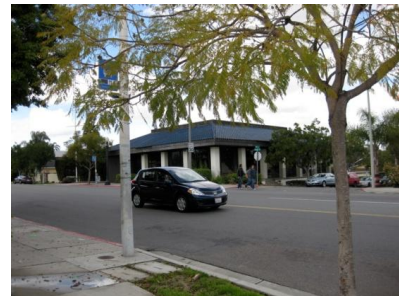
The proximity of the I-15 to the park creates noise and causes people to congregate more on the west side of the park near the playground. The high speed of traffic on Adams Avenue and also on 40th discourages parents with children from using the east side of the park. No one was observed using that side of the park near Adams during the site visit. The traffic noise can be quite loud. Sound walls were constructed along a portion of the I-15 but do not mitigate the freeway noise to a comfortable level. The noise from traffic on Adams Avenue also compounds the issue.



Design Recommendations

Create more active uses surrounding the park site.

There is a vacant commercial bank on the northwest corner of Adams Avenue and 39th Street that would be a prime opportunity to for redevelopment with a use that would provide more activity in the area and also natural surveillance for the park after daylight hours.



The Community Relations Office is in poor condition. This site at the corner of the park should be redeveloped with a new Community Relations Office that provides a view into the park or perhaps demolished entirely and a new entryway could be created to invite Normal Heights residents into the park.

The future redevelopment of the single and multi-Family properties into different uses should be considered in the future. Any new development should provide windows and entryways onto 39th street to ensure that some natural surveillance can occur.

Encourage adults and seniors to use the park

The park is primarily used by families with children. The utility of the park has not been fully explored. Some modifications should be considered to encourage others to enjoy the park's amenities. A stage could be constructed at the amphitheatre to allow for community performances or to encourage imaginative play. Checker or chess tables in the sitting and picnic area or other types of game opportunities may draw older adults to the park. Re-arrange picnic benches and tables to create conversation areas.

Mitigate noise and other effects of the freeway and traffic

Noise mitigation should be explored to minimize the freeway noise experienced at the park. In addition, traffic calming should be considered along Adams Avenue to decrease speeds along the frontage of the park.

Improve the pedestrian experience on the I-15 bridge

Improvements to the I-15 should be done to encourage pedestrians to cross the I-15 bridge to use the park. New street trees, non-contiguous sidewalks or other pedestrian amenities should be considered for this area.

Improve the connection between the school and park

The City and San Diego Unified School District should work together to allow for more integration between the school and park. The uses are highly complementary and could function more like a school and park campus rather than two distinct places.

